

*Berford Newcomer*  
NOV. 20 1946

# The Medieval Art of Illumination as applied to Lincoln's Gettysburg Address





# All-But-Lost

*New Disciple of Illumin  
Complete Lincoln'*

By Ralph

**H**AD it not been for the depression of 1929 you and I today might not have the privilege of looking upon the exquisite illuminating work of Edward Gentile. For it took the deprivations and the discouragements of the economic slump to send this gifted son of Italian immigrants out searching for two things—a new source of livelihood, and an escape from the gloomy realism of the art which arose out of the period. In his own ingenious adaptation of the all-but-lost art of illuminating he found both.

This one-time railroad call boy and telegraph operator has, however, given something to the world as well. He has revived, and proved that in this age of surrealism there is a place and appreciation for, an ancient mode of expressing beauty.

Illuminating must not be confused with engrossing, which many insist is an art in itself. The engrosser copies legal documents, diplomas, awards and such things in a "fair, large hand." (Thus *en gros!*) He embellishes his work with sweeping flourishes, usually working with ink, in one color, using a special engrosser's pen. And while the engrosser is credited with keeping alive the profession of free-hand writing and printing as a sort of commercial adaptation of the ancient

served examples of the art have the theological background. Of the 32 pieces which Mr. Gentile has completed, 19 have religious subjects, a field especially well adapted for the graceful beauty of illumination where illustration at all is suitable.

Before the depression Mr. Gentile was a commercial artist. The slump little removed this means of livelihood and the family had a pretty difficult time of it for a while. An antique shop and job as supervisor of a WPA art project helped things along. It was here that Gentile revealed that he had the heart of a true artist. Seeing no market for such a thing, but repelled by the ugliness of art inspired by the disturbed conditions of the times, he turned to illumination. He had not studied it, in fact had never studied color, and color is most important in illumination. But Mr. Gentile was ahead, keeping out enough money to buy materials and paints, and gold leaf, which is an expensive item.

He chose as his subjects Biblical, patriotic, and inspirational themes. Partaking of printing out the texts, he worked around them intricate designs produced with scrolls, symbolical figures, appropriate landscapes, arabesques, and even birds and flowers.

## Movie Star Praises Painting



Edward G. Robinson, famous motion picture star, on his recent visit to Chicago to aid the sale of defense savings bonds, was greeted by Edward Gentile (left), 109 North Oak Park avenue. Mr. Robinson, who owns a collection of artistic masterpieces, was particularly interested in Mr. Gentile's portrait of Lincoln. Mr. Gentile required nine months to complete the portrait, which is framed by scenes from the life of Lincoln and the Gettysburg address.

# All-But-Lost Art Revived

New Disciple of Illuminating Took Six Months to Complete Lincoln's Gettysburg Address

By Ralph W. Cessna

**H**AD it not been for the depression of 1929 you and I today might not have the privilege of looking upon the exquisite illuminating work of Edward Gentile. If it took the deprivations and the discouragements of the economic slump to send this gifted son of Italian immigrants out searching for two things—a new source of livelihood, and an escape from the gloomy realism of the art which arose out of the period. In his own ingenious adaptation of the all-but-lost art of illuminating he found both.

This one-time railroad call boy and telegraph operator has, however, given something to the world as well. He has revived, and proved that in this age of surrealism there is a place and appreciation for, an ancient mode of expressing beauty.

Illuminating must not be confused with engraving, which many insist is an art in itself. The engraver copies legal documents, diplomas, awards and such things in a "fair, large hand." (Thus *en gros!*) He embellishes his work with sweeping flourishes, usually working with ink, in one color, using a special engraver's pen. And while the engraver is credited with keeping alive the profession of free-hand writing and printing as a sort of commercial adaptation of the ancient illuminator's art, it is not illuminating.

Illumination, according to the Encyclopaedia Britannica, is "the embellishment of written or printed text or design with colors or gold." In ancient times the printer of the text and the decorator or illuminator were often one person. But sometimes as many as five or six worked on one manuscript, one doing the lettering, another the elaborately decorated capitals, another the scrolls, another the miniatures and ornamental accessories, and so on.

From the first known examples of illumination in the fourth century, up until a hundred years or so after the discovery of printing, the art developed a refinement, but also a narrow standardization. And here is where Mr. Gentile comes in.

Instead of simply doing what the old illuminators did, instead of trying to apply their traditional themes and figures to modern ideas, Mr. Gentile used or created modern designs to fit the need. The theme of the text is carried into the scenes and figures, even into the scrollwork. Whereas the old illuminators came to rely on a standard set of designs and figures, Mr. Gentile uses what the text calls for. The result is that when examined carefully his work is seen to resemble that of the ancient illuminators only in the quaint formality and exuberance of the embellishment.

Illumination is associated in the popular mind with religious subjects, probably because before the discovery of printing about the only literature was the Bible and theological manuscripts, and these were printed and illuminated by hand, largely by monks. Ancient illumination appeared in connection with other than religious subjects, but much of the pre-

served examples of the art have the theological background. Of the 32 pieces which Mr. Gentile has completed, 19 have religious subjects, a field especially well adapted for the graceful beauty of illumination where illustration at all is suitable.

Before the depression Mr. Gentile was a commercial artist. The slump little by little removed this means of livelihood and the family had a pretty difficult time of it for a while. An antique shop and a job as supervisor of a WPA art project helped things along. It was here that Mr. Gentile revealed that he had the heart of a true artist. Seeing no market for such a thing, but repelled by the ugliness of the art inspired by the disturbed condition of the times, he turned to illumination.

He had not studied it, in fact had never studied color, and color is most important in illumination. But Mr. Gentile went ahead, keeping out enough money to buy materials and paints, and gold leaf, which is an expensive item.

He chose as his subjects Biblical, patriotic, and inspirational themes. Painstakingly printing out the texts, he wove around them intricate designs profuse with scrolls, symbolical figures, appropriate landscapes, arabesques, and exotic birds and flowers.

Besides the gold leaf he used six colors, delicate pastel shades and emerald green, red, and blue. It is notable that in spite of his lack of special color training he is able to take such an ordinarily vivid color as the red in the American flag and produce a whole, containing pastel greens and blues, without a jarring color note. Asked how he does it, he says he doesn't know; technically, he "just does it."

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Whereas the old-time illuminator, working often with a whole book before him, completed each letter with a single stroke, Mr. Gentile often works at each letter as if it were a separate portrait. Where it took the ancient scribe hours to do a page, it takes Mr. Gentile many days to complete just a line or two of textual matter. It required four months to do the Concord Hymn, he says, and six months to complete Lincoln's Gettysburg Address.

"What appeared as a misfortune," says Mr. Gentile, referring to the depression, "has proved a blessing in disguise. In this

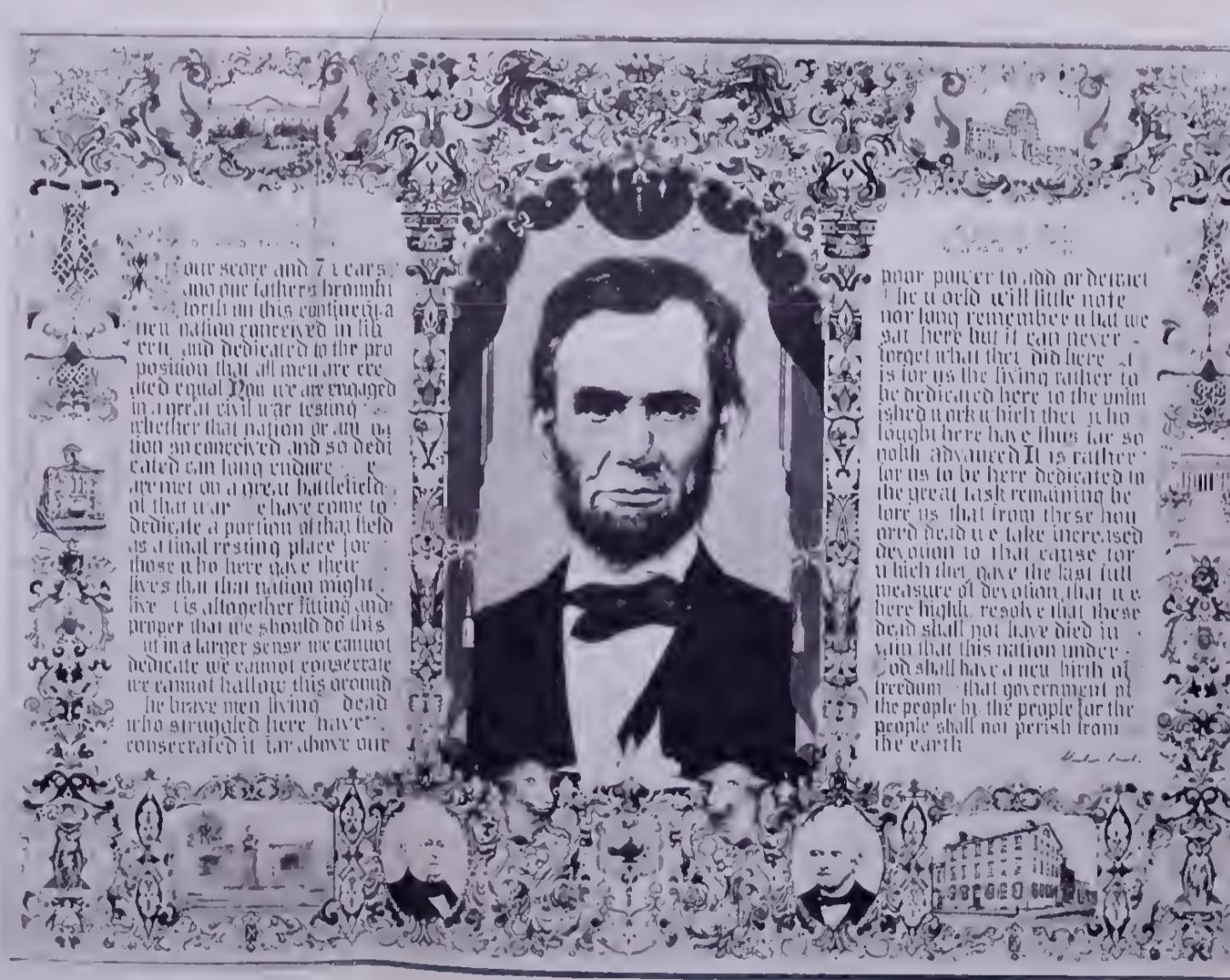
revival of an ancient art I feel that I have found myself."

Meanwhile his work has not been gathering dust on the shelves at home. He has refused no request to exhibit for worthy causes, frequently in connection with War recruiting campaigns and War Bond sales. Once a work based on the Joyce Kilmer poem "Trees" was exhibited in connection with the film "The Fighting 69th," in which the poet was depicted as one of the chief characters. This picture hung for some time in the lobby of a Chicago theater, and the management was flooded with requests for reprints, which were not then available.

Among his illuminations of religious subjects is "The Daily Prayer," by Mary Baker Eddy, Discoverer and Founder of Christian Science.

It was a kind word of encouragement from the late Robert B. Harshe, director of the Art Institute, upon seeing his illumination of "The 121st Psalm," which Mr. Gentile says gave him the inspiration to continue in what he saw as a pioneering path, unlikely for some time at least to bring much material return.

It seems, though, that his day is about to come.



## Turns Down \$35,000 For Two of His Works

By Paul T. Gilbert.

AFTER having lost his home, his business and his life savings in the depression, and after having worked at wages of \$90 a month as a director of a WPA art project, Edward Gentile of 109 Oak Park av., Oak Park, re-



Edward Gentile.

cently refused an offer of \$35,000 for two of his paintings and the copyrights thereto.

And there are few, even among the top-flight American artists, who can command a price like that.

Up to five years ago Gentile had never studied color. He became interested, however, in the all-but-lost medieval art of illumination—the decoration of old manuscripts as perfected by painstaking monks, working in their cells by candlelight.

Gentile's workshop was as bare as any monastery cell. It consisted of a back room in a dingy store building, where he and his wife made their home. From his scanty savings he purchased materials—gold leaf was the most expensive—for the revival of this art.

REVOLTING from the ugliness and pseudo modernism of depression art, with its depiction of factory and slum scenes, he developed a new, yet old, interpretation of beauty.

He chose for his subjects Biblical, patriotic and inspirational themes—Washington's Inaugural Prayer; Lincoln's Gettysburg Address; Emerson's Concord Hymn; Joyce Kilmer's "Trees"; the verse from the Gospel of St. John, "I am the vine, ye are the branches"; the 121st Psalm, "I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills."

Around these literary gems he wove intricate designs abounding in scrolls, arabesques, symbolical figures, exotic birds and flowers,

SEVERAL of his patriotic paintings, however, were loaned to the War recruiting station in Forest Park and to the Treasury Department for the promotion of war bond sales.

Gentile's talents as a draughtsman were utilized by the armed services in World War I, when he was assigned to making panoramic maps from an observation balloon.

Returning to civilian life, he became a commercial artist, only to lose his accounts with the New York stock market crash. "But what appeared as a misfortune at the time has proved a blessing in disguise," he says. "In this revival of an ancient art I feel that I have found myself."

THE WHITE HOUSE  
WASHINGTON

April 20, 1936.

My dear Mr. Gentile:

Mrs. Roosevelt asked me to thank

C.R.J.

March 7, 1942.

Dear Mr. Gentile:

Among my Chicago notes I find one marked Lincoln Day painting, which serves as a reminder to tell you how much I enjoyed meeting you and how much I was impressed by your painting.

With all good wishes, believe me,

You're very sincerely,

Edward P. Robinson.  
Edward P. Robinson.

TREASURY DEPARTMENT  
WAR SAVINGS STAFF

July 22nd.

Mr. Edward Gentile  
109 N. Oak Park Ave.,  
Oak Park, Ill.

Dear Sir:

It was my extreme pleasure to witness the unveiling of your masterpiece of water color

THE ART INSTITUTE OF CHICAGO

POTTER PALMER, President  
ROBERT ALLERTON, Vice-President  
CHARLES H. WORCESTER, Honorary President  
CHARLES H. ECKERHOLDT, Director of Fine Arts  
CHARLES H. ECKERHOLDT, Vice-President  
CHARLES H. ECKERHOLDT, Director of Finance and Operation  
WALTER B. SMITH, Treasurer  
CHAUNCEY MCCORMICK, Vice-President  
CHARLES H. ECKERHOLDT, Assistant Director  
TELEPHONE CENTRAL 7080

May 5, 1944

Mr. Edward F. Gentile  
109 North Oak Park Avenue  
Oak Park, Illinois

My dear Mr. Gentile:

Many thanks for showing me your recent beautiful illuminations. They are very perfect in design and color, and I hope you will find a publisher sufficiently gifted to reproduce them in all of their beauty.

When this occurs, please let me know, as I am sure I have a number of possible buyers for prints.

Thanking you again for the pleasure of seeing them, I beg to remain

Yours very sincerely,  
Henri F. Guthez  
Sales Manager  
The Art Institute of Chicago

CARSON PIRIE SCOTT & Co.  
STATE, MADISON, WABASH, MONROE  
CHICAGO

TELEPHONE STATE 1000  
March 6, 1943

Mr. Edward Gentile  
109 N. Oak Park Avenue  
Oak Park, Illinois

My dear Mr. Gentile:

The staff of the book section of Carson Pirie Scott & Co. wish to express their appreciation of the beautiful illuminated parchment you made of the Gettysburg Address with the portrait of Abraham Lincoln. Many customers who saw it in the center of our book window were very disappointed at not being able to buy copies.

BOSTON STORE OF CHICAGO, INC.  
DOING BUSINESS AS  
NETCHIER'S BOSTON STORE  
STATE AND MADISON STREETS  
CHICAGO

May 16, 1944

Mr. Edward Gentile  
109 N. Oak Park Ave.  
Oak Park, Illinois

Dear Mr. Gentile:

Please accept our sincere thanks for the use of your original George Washington illuminated manuscript during Fourth War Loan Bond Drive. It can truly said that it is a masterpiece.

It may be of interest to you to know that many people made favorable comment on it and we had several phone calls from who wanted to know where they could get it.

THE PAN AMERICAN COUNCIL

84 EAST RANDOLPH STREET  
CHICAGO, ILLINOIS  
TELEPHONE DEARBORN 0539

Mr. Edward Gentile  
109 N. Oak Park Avenue  
Oak Park, Illinois

My dear Mr. Gentile:

I want to tell you how very much I enjoyed your beautiful exhibition now on display in the COLLEGE CLUB at 30 North Michigan Avenue. These works of yours are indeed lovely, and truly an inspiration for the Holy Week.

Several of the visitors, I understand, have been very high in their praises of the exhibit, and there have been several requests, too, as to the possibilities of purchasing some of these, I was told on my visit to the Club rooms today.

I wouldn't have missed seeing this exhibit for anything, and I want to extend to you my sincere congratulations upon the display both as to the achievement it represents and the success it is as a most timely exhibition.

You have my every good wish for your continued success always!

Very sincerely yours,

Elizabeth O. Marshall  
Art and Exhibitions Chairman  
The Pan American Council of Chicago

N:EEM

CENTURY GALLERY  
MARTWARE . . . DIANA COURT . . . KATHERINE LEWIS  
619 NORTH MICHIGAN AVENUE CHICAGO

April the twenty-seventh.

My dear Mr. Gentile:

Mandel Brothers  
State to Wabash at Madison St.  
Chicago

Executive Offices

May 16, 1944

Mr. Edward Gentile  
109 N. Oak Park Avenue  
Oak Park, Illinois

Dear Mr. Gentile:

Thank you for permitting us to display

THE PLIMPTON PRESS  
NORWOOD P MASS USA

TELEPHONE:  
NORWOOD 0121

NORWOOD, MASS.

April 30, 1940

Mrs. Ruth R. Gentile,  
109 North Oak Park Avenue,  
Oak Park, Illinois

De

CORONET  
MAGAZINE  
919 NORTH MICHIGAN AVENUE  
CHICAGO II, ILLINOIS

INCOLIN NATIONAL  
LIFE FOUNDATION

FORT WAYNE, INDIANA

May 2, 1945

Mr. Edward Gentile  
109 N. Oak Park Avenue  
Oak Park, Illinois

My dear Mr. Gentile:

I am very happy indeed to receive the magazine "The Louis Allis Messenger" which carries such a fine reproduction of your painting.

We would be most happy to hear from you if you are successful in securing a publisher for the print and will look forward to receiving a copy.

Please find under separate cover a little packet of Lincoln material which we have got together which you will please receive with our compliments.

Very truly yours,  
James A. Warren  
Director

LAW:WM

THE LOUIS ALLIS CO.  
ESTABLISHED 1900



MANUFACTURERS OF ELECTRIC MOTORS  
MILWAUKEE 7, WIS.

May 5, 1944

Mr. Edward Gentile  
109 N. Park Avenue  
Oak Park, Illinois

Dear Sir:

A couple days ago I stopped and read with great interest the

The Fair

State Adams and Dearborn Streets  
Chicago

LINE OF MARSHAL ST  
OAK PARK

May 23, 1944

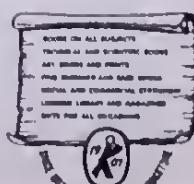
Edward Gentile  
109 N. Oak Park Ave.,  
Oak Park, Ill.

Dear Mr. Gentile:

I am taking this opportunity to tell you that your



KROCH'S BOOKSTORES, INC.  
BOOKSELLERS AND STATIONERS  
206 NORTH MICHIGAN AVE • TELEPHONES RANDOLPH 55620  
Chicago, ILLINOIS



May 6, 1943

Mr. Edward Gentile  
109 North Oak Park Avenue  
Oak Park, Illinois

Dear Mr. Gentile:

Please accept my sincere gratitude for your kindness in permitting us to display your beautiful illuminated paintings. We were proud to show them in our window and received many favorable comments.

BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS  
FOR FOREIGN MISSIONS  
TAUNTON STREET, BOSTON 8

MISSIONS COUNCIL  
OF THE  
CONGREGATIONAL CHRISTIAN CHURCHES  
MID-WEST REGIONAL OFFICE  
19 S. LA SALLE STREET  
CHICAGO 3

May 28, 1944.

Mr. Edward Gentile,  
109 N. Oak Park Ave.,  
Oak Park, Ill.

My dear Mr. Gentile:

Thank you very much for giving me the privilege of viewing your very fine painting of Abraham Lincoln's Gettysburg Address, which is the result of your long, painstaking efforts. The artistic work on this is first class in design, coloring and finished execution. The symbolism to indicate the great qualities in Lincoln is very cleverly worked out and the whole setting of the famous address is rich and satisfying. This is a very unique and high grade piece of work. It is to be hoped that reproductions of this in color can be made, so that it can have a wide distribution. Were such reproductions on the market, I feel there would be considerable demand for them.

Sincerely yours,

Howell D. Davis.

Howell D. Davis.

BOARD OF HOME MISSIONS  
111 FOURTH AVE.,  
NEW YORK CITY 10

# Art Revived

## ting Took Six Months to Gettysburg Address

W. Cessna

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<http://archive.org/details/medievalartoffine>

*The Medieval Art of*  
**ILLUMINATION**  
*as applied to*  
**LINCOLN'S**  
**GETTYSBURG ADDRESS**



973.7 L63  
N1863gyma

Lincoln Room

*The Medieval Art of*  
**ILLUMINATION**  
*as applied to*  
**LINCOLN'S**  
**GETTYSBURG ADDRESS**

Much has been written about the "Dark Ages" and its adverse effect upon the advancement of civilization. Yet, little is known of those brilliant medieval minds who chose to guard what marks of civilization remained, and, whenever opportunity afforded, added to its noble store in that period which followed the epic incursion of the Mongol hordes from Asia, and its inevitable historical aftermath.

Perhaps no other branch of the arts contributed quite so much and so consistently to the advancement of culture during this almost negative period of history as that of the craftsmen who labored to produce the *Illuminated Manuscripts*. In the realm of art, this technique is known as *Illumination*, and is applied to the embellishment of written (and later of printed) text or design with colours of gold and (though rarely) silver.

*Illumination* in art received its first impetus with the introduction of *Parchment*. *Parchment*, as a receiving medium, had distinct advantages over the earlier form of *Papyrus*, being less brittle at the edges, and withstanding corrections and expunging better. Moreover, *Parchment* had a freer surface and thus proved to be the spark of life that gave birth to *Illumination* in manuscript.

The first great period in the history of *Illumination* reaches back to about the fourth century A.D. During the 1200 years in which it flourished it provided an important medium through which much of the world's knowledge was safeguarded and maintained. Its golden age parallels the tremulous poverty and ignorance of the Dark Ages. At the few seats of culture in the Mediterranean area, Byzantium, Asia Minor and western Europe, medieval scholars, patrons composed of segments of far-seeing rov-

alty and knighthood, and penitent, hard-working monks in their monasteries, captured the history of their times and dug into the history of the past to set down their findings in Latin, Sanskrit and Coptic characters in melting black lines and columns upon the soft tones of *Parchment*, embroidered with prosaic designs in beautiful colours and hues, with bold patches of gold for emphasis, enlivened with pictures and miniatures of those characters who dominated their texts, or patrons who made them possible.

The *Illuminated Manuscript* of ancient times was in effect a symposium, a collaboration, a united work executed jointly by as many as six separate artisans or craftsmen, each a specialist in his own field. The first of these, the scribe, commenced the work by running down the sides of each page a wheel armed with teeth at equal distances, an instrument still in use among law stationers as late as the 19th century. From these point marks left on the *Parchment*, very delicate lines in red or brown were ruled across the page. Within these lines were written his text, with spaces left open for capital letters, miniatures or other decorations. The scribe in turn was followed by the calligrapher whose task it was to place the capital letters and coloured ornamental accessories in their proper places. Then came the miniaturist who gave his measure of life and breath to the work, followed in his turn by the *Illuminator* whose strokes left patches of gold here and there upon the surface of the *Manuscript* for all to marvel at. Later, Heraldry introduced its own peculiar art to such *Manuscript* as was commissioned by some knight or royal personage. These specialists came to be known collectively as "*Enlumineurs*", *Iluminatores* or *Illuminators*.

Each seat of culture contributed some technique or decorative scheme indigenous of its own. For example, among magnificent Greek *Manuscript* of medieval times, some were written in gold upon purple-stained skins.

Perhaps no other book has been quite so personal in its appeal as "*The Little Hours of the Virgin*". These books of hours were made on commission for important personages and each carried thru it some characteristic suggestion of its patron owner. It offered the scribe a relatively short text and the *Illuminator* a charming series of subjects and show more and more response to the laymans desire for show and splendor. It is difficult to think how this desire could be better gratified than by the glowing blue of powdered lapis that shone on the Virgin's cloak in painted miniatures; by the glint of gold-leaf in the marginal lines, raised by sizing, the better to catch the light; by the rubrications of pure vermilion (now become so rare in art and generally synthetized) interspersed among the lines of text.

A book like this might well be treasured by a queen. It was a unique and intensely personal work of art.

One of the most pretentious and successful books of all times is the "*Book of Kells*", a book of the Gospels produced in Ireland in the 7th century. On seeing the curiously sophisticated and intricate embellishments of this *Manuscript*, one realizes that the "*Spark of Civilization*", almost extinguished at that time, was well guarded in the Irish monasteries from whence it came. This Irish sacred book with its somewhat rigid perfection, influenced work in the English school from 664 A.D. onward.

Charlemagne, singular regal product of the Dark Ages called upon artisans and craftsmen of his time to produce the so-called "*Carolingian Minuscule*", evolving within it great lightness and crispness, due to the simplicity of the letters used, producing in turn a freer style of *Illumination*. The bold outstanding initial letters (which brightly painted served as a useful pointer in finding passages) comes into closer relation to the text; vines descend from it until they cover the margin and finally a whole illustrative scene is incorporated within a large initial.

Thus thru the ages, step by step, the *Illuminator* created and produced his work, spreading much of the intellectual light of his time. *Illuminated Manuscripts*, hand-done in every detail permitted a wide latitude for the imagination of the medieval artist-creator. Much of their technique was borrowed by painters in oils as Renaissance canvases in our museums today will testify; or loaned to the sculptor's craft, in the design of church doors or tablets, examples of which can be seen in the old centers of culture on the continent. The books of today are the results of certain laws and rules first set down by the early *Illuminator* and other forms of literature and art too, are not without their influence of *Illuminated Art* forms.

With the first bright light of the Renaissance came the printing press and the death knell of *Illuminated Art* was sounded in the squeak of the first printers screw press. For a century, *Illuminators* continued to embellish the printed works and go beyond the capacities of movable type and mechanical limitations, but the mass educational movement spreading rapidly over the continent cried out for more books, cheaply printed and produced and the art of *Illumination* was stifled.

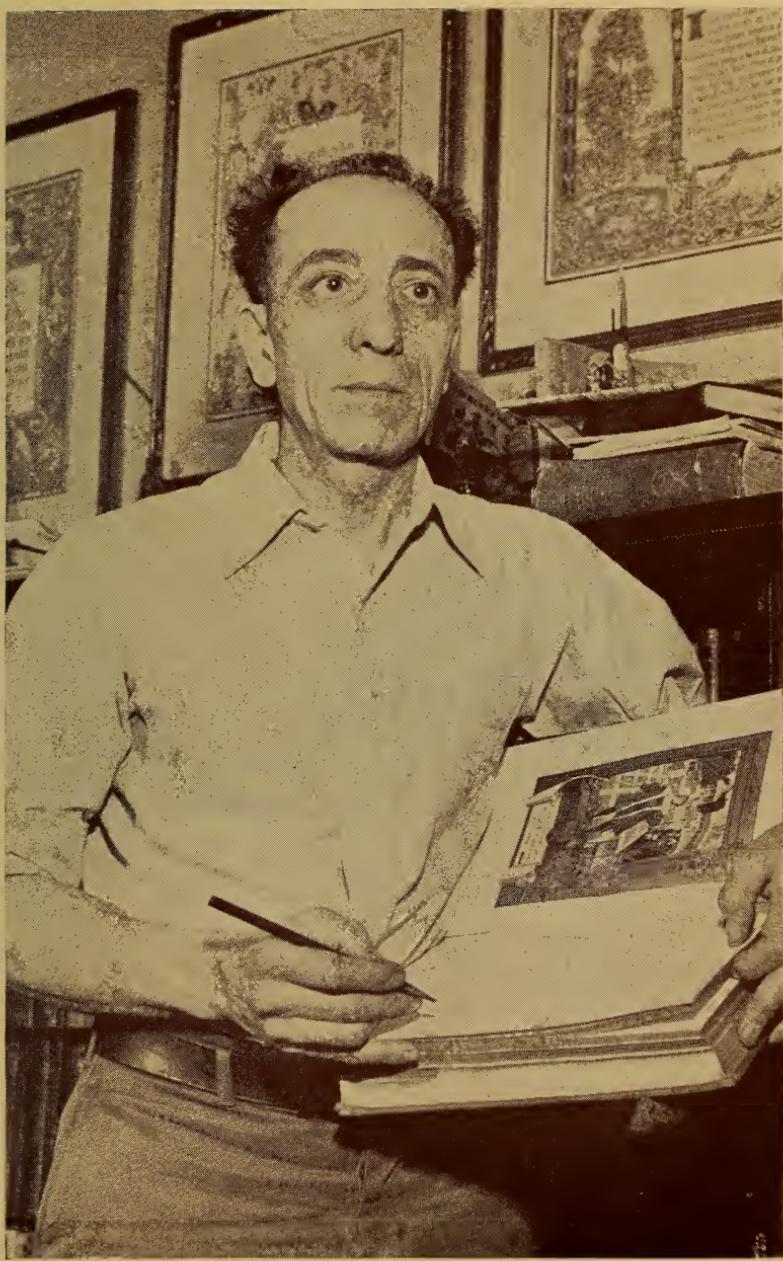
The earliest printed books, by imitating closely every artistic rule of the calligrapher and the scribe, profited by twelve centuries of previous experiment. Type-founders, while they could not equal the nervous fineness of

the best writing certainly attained a new consistency and clarity of letter design. The lover of books done in the style of *Illuminated Manuscripts*, fine hand-tooled bindings and original painted illustrations may quite rightly maintain that such original pieces are works of art, not of reproduction. However beautiful a piece of typography is, (and it has unique and subtle beauties of its own) it is in its very nature a replica, a thing produced by a machine. Collectors and rich patrons however, could still add a hand-tooled or inlaid binding and make it an individual work of art to that extent. And so *Illuminators*, too, continued to work on the printed page but only to a limited extent. The surflike surges of the past dozen centuries became calm and placid and within a century after the introduction of printing, *Illuminated Manuscripts* took their rightful place among the relics and products of Antiquity.

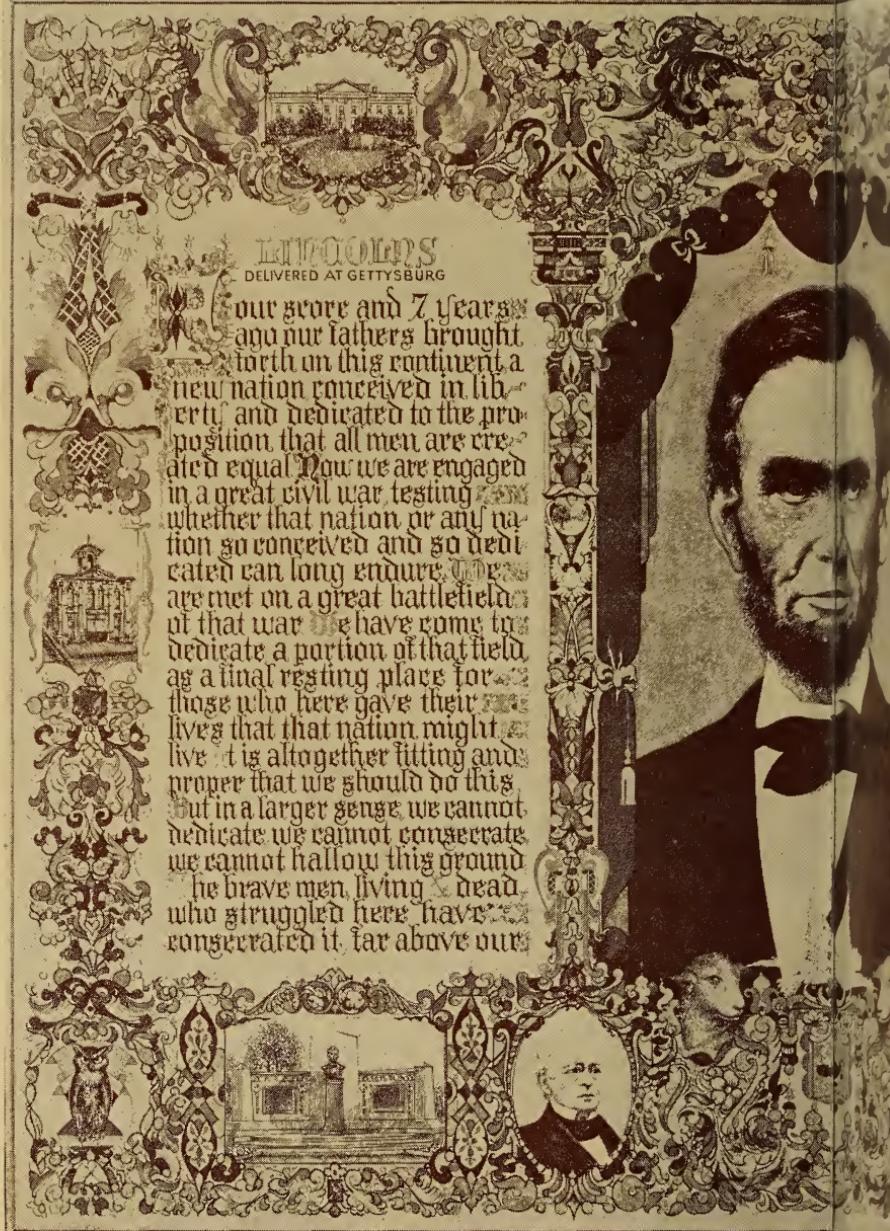
\* \* \*

From time to time, since the Renaissance, *Illumination* in art has been executed by various artists, but generally speaking it has never been given a rebirth of spirit. If this is done in our day it will doubtless be thru the impetus given such a rebirth by EDWARD GENTILE. EDWARD GENTILE is a product of the city of Chicago, being born there on July 20, 1890. After a normal boyhood he enrolled as a student in the ART INSTITUTE OF CHICAGO, receiving formal instruction there in commercial art during 1911-1912. Feeling as many other commercial artists felt, that an easier success was assured in the east, he worked in Philadelphia and New York City in the years before World War I. During this stage in his career, MR. GENTILE had begun to perfect a technique in design that was enjoying a certain vogue at the time. This technique was actually his first steps toward becoming an *Illuminator* although perhaps he himself did not realize it then. With the declaration of war, he enlisted and served as a panoramic draftsman in the Balloon Corps with the A.E.F. Home from the war, he came back to his native Chicago and re-entered the commercial field as a free lance artist.

In Chicago, MR. GENTILE widened his experience and within a few years his work was much sought after. In April of 1925, *The Inland Printer* featured ten examples of his "*Decorative Design and Lettering*", devoting eight full pages to the feature. This article evoked high praise among the leaders of the commercial art world at the time. In those pages one can easily see that MR. GENTILE was experiencing a transition from commercial to fine art.



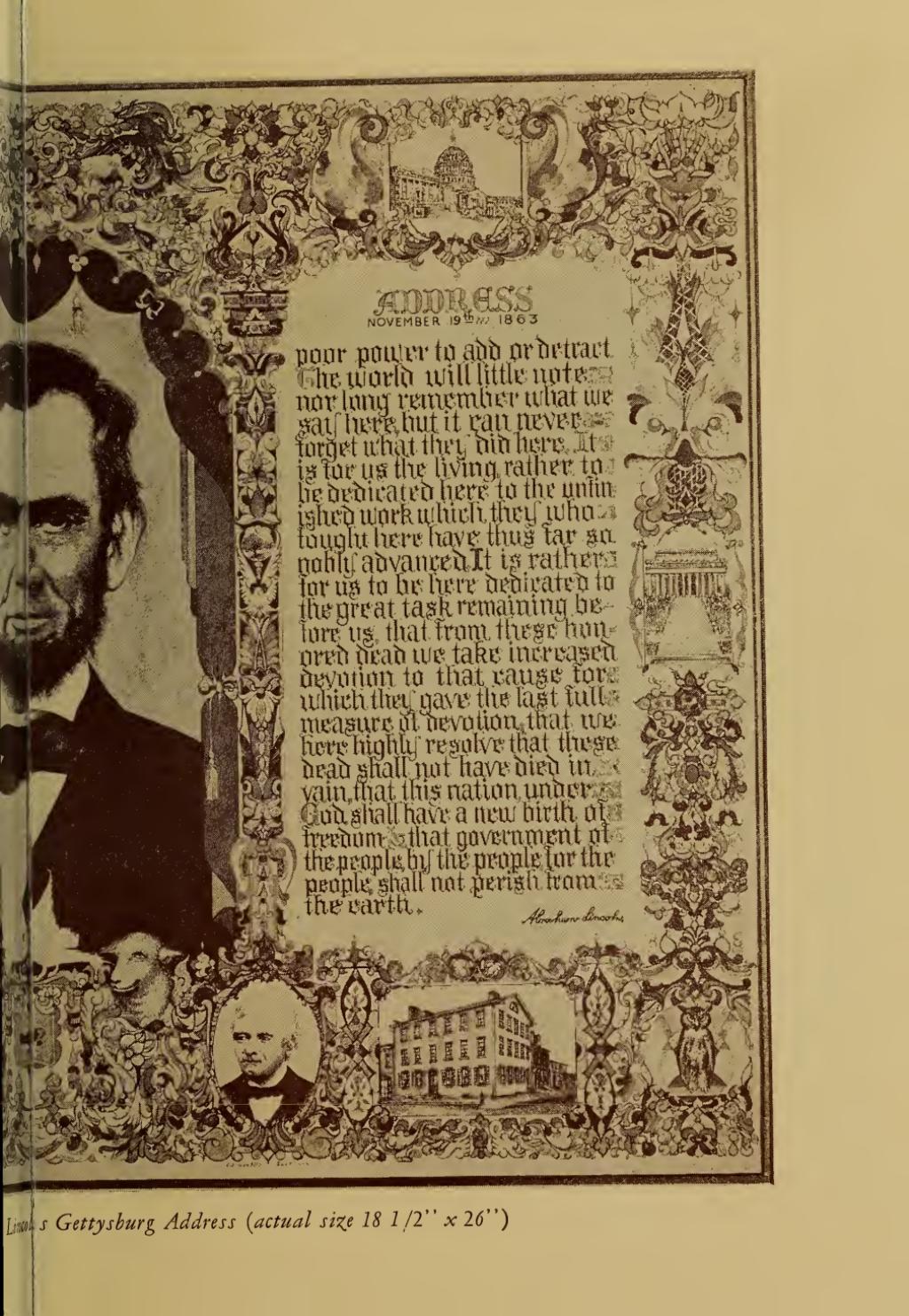
*Edward Gentile present day exponent of the art of illumination.*



LINCOLNS  
DELIVERED AT GETTYSBURG

Four score and seven years ago our fathers brought forth on this continent a new nation conceived in liberty and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal. Now we are engaged in a great civil war, testing whether that nation or any nation so conceived and so dedicated can long endure. We are met on a great battlefield of that war. We have come to dedicate a portion of that field as a final resting place for those who here gave their lives that that nation might live. It is altogether fitting and proper that we should do this. But in a larger sense, we cannot dedicate; we cannot consecrate; we cannot hallow this ground. The brave men, living and dead, who struggled here, have consecrated it, far above our

Monotone reproduction of the illumination of Lincoln's Gettysburg Address.



## ADDRESS

NOVEMBER 19<sup>th</sup> 1863

poor power to add or detract. The world will little note nor long remember what we say here; but it can never forget what they did here. It is for us the living rather to be dedicated here to the unfinished work which they who fought here have thus far so nobly advanced. It is rather for us to be here dedicated to the great task remaining before us, that from these honored dead we take increased devotion to that cause for which they gave the last full measure of devotion, that we here highly resolve that these dead shall not have died in vain, that this nation, under God, shall have a new birth of freedom, that government of the people by the people for the people shall not perish from the earth.

Abraham Lincoln



*Portion of illumination of Lincoln's Gettysburg Address reproduced in monotone full size showing intricateness of detail.*

Within the next few years MR. GENTILE was a frequent exhibitor in Chicago galleries. In 1926 his first attempts at *Illuminated Manuscripts* were exhibited in the *All-Illinois Society Exhibit* at the GALLERIES OF THE CARSON PIRIE SCOTT AND COMPANY. Others followed in the *Chicago and Vicinity Shows*, *Exhibit of the Renaissance Society* of the UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO, the ART INSTITUTE, MARSHALL FIELD GALLERIES, CENTURY GALLERIES and the STEVENS HOTEL ART CORRIDOR. His first pieces were relatively simple measured against his more recent productions. Also, his earlier works are religious in character, since these subjects lent themselves to *Illumination* so readily.

In the later 1920's the commercial art technique which MR. GENTILE had perfected, gave way in popularity to the modern trends which were then sweeping the country. With this turn of events MR. GENTILE decided to devote his entire time to *Illumination in Art*. In effect, MR. GENTILE is a singular product of *Illumination in Art*. In the days that the art flourished it must be remembered that each step in the execution of a *Manuscript* was undertaken and completed by a specialist; the scribe, the calligrapher, the designer, the miniaturist, the *Illuminator*, the heraldic artisan, etc., MR. GENTILE is all of these combined into one. It is significant that all phases of *Illuminated Art* are handled by him without any of them suffering by comparison with the other. His lettering is beyond criticism, his design is so intricate and colourful that it is beyond description, his use of allegory is provocative, his miniatures are as finely executed and colourful as any to be found, his dominant subject matter is handled in such a way that only praise can result, while the *Illumination* itself demonstrates the result of profound study.

As his experience in *Illumination* widened, so too did his scope of subject matter. In his search for appropriate material, MR. GENTILE came upon literary themes utilizing Joyce Kilmer's "*Trees*" and Emily Taylor's "*A Mother's Love*", even Shakespeare. Exploring literature further he brought the literary theme into conjunction with history by using Francis Scott Key's "*The Star Spangled Banner*", Washington's "*Inaugural Prayer*", Emerson's "*Concord Hymn*", and finally, Lincoln's "*Gettysburg Address*".

As these were completed they were shown and given wide publicity. The historical themes with their appeal to patriotism were extensively used by the Treasury Department at its many bond rallies, and as window displays in bond campaigns. In this way the *Illuminated Manuscripts* of MR. GENTILE were viewed by hundreds of thousands of people. There

soon arose a demand for reproductions. The persistency of this popular demand prompted the artist to investigate the possibility, rather one should say the probability of reproductions. With this thought in mind MR. GENTILE decided to place his works into competent hands for technical graphic study, since it was his profound desire to see his works reproduced as faithfully by mechanical processes as he himself executed them so painstakingly by hand.

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In selecting the first of MR. GENTILE's *Illuminated Manuscripts* to be reproduced, artist, publishers and sponsors heartily agreed that it should be the *Illuminated Manuscript of Lincoln's Gettysburg Address*. MR. GENTILE himself always favored this subject over the two-score *Illuminated Manuscripts* he has executed to this writing. In fact, all who view the *Illuminated Manuscript of Lincoln's Gettysburg Address* are united in praise of it.

The *Illuminated Manuscript of Lincoln's Gettysburg Address* is truly a work of the highest art obtainable, inspiring in its beauty, subtle in its spirit. The work measures 18½x26 inches with a mat of 4 inches surrounding it. The striking center of attraction is a portrait of Abraham Lincoln, three-quarters life size. The artist availed himself of the famous photograph of Lincoln taken by the photographer, Alexander Gardner, as his chief pictorial reference. It was shortly after the battle of Gettysburg, in the summer of 1863, that President Lincoln sat for several photographs in the studio of Alexander Gardner, in Washington. For reasons of his own President Lincoln was not pleased with the results and so he revisited Gardner's studio on November 15, 1863, just a few days before delivering his immortal Gettysburg Address. Among the photos taken on this date was the one used by Mr. GENTILE as his main guide in painting the President as he looked at the time of the Gettysburg Address. This photograph is regarded as perhaps the best ever taken of Lincoln while he was President. The lifelike tones of colour in MR. GENTILE's portrait, together with colours and treatment of the background and surrounding portal are in themselves a rare work.

On either side of the portrait standing out boldly in melting black cloister type is the Gettysburg Address, word for word, as Lincoln spoke it, the artist availing himself of poetic license on only a few occasions, namely, the numeral seven and the use of the ampersand, a circumstance that adds rather than detracts from its poetic effect. As capital letters appear, they are enhanced into rich swash characters in numerous colours. Spaces to fill out sentences and between words are rich in gold embellishments.

Framing the portrait in the center and the address on either side are intricate designs, decorations and miniatures, and allegorical designs symbolizing the character and nature of Abraham Lincoln. The combination of these units appear totem-like at first, but on closer inspection are found to be unbelievably well worked out patterns of decoration, geometrically and symbolically perfect.

Inserted in these decorations that form within themselves a natural border are miniatures of landmarks and personalities made famous by the Gettysburg meeting. In the upper part of the *Illuminated Manuscript of Lincoln's Gettysburg Address* is pictured the White House, home of the presidents, as it appeared in Lincoln's day; the Capitol, seat of legislative power of the United States and symbol of Constitutional Government. In the lower part are miniatures of Edward Everett, who gave the oration of the day at the Gettysburg dedication, his address being two hours in length compared with Lincoln's two or three minute effort. However, Everett's oration is nearly forgotten, while Lincoln's gains new converts annually. Everett was seventy-one years of age at the time and his speech at Gettysburg proved to be his last great oration. Beside Everett, is a miniature of Andrew Gregg Curtin, Civil War governor of Pennsylvania and host to those at Gettysburg. On either side of the Everett and Curtin miniatures are pictures of the David Wills House and the Lincoln Speech Memorial that marks the location of the Gettysburg dedication. David Wills lived on the "Diamond", Gettysburg's city square and was the first person to suggest a National Cemetery at Gettysburg. When Lincoln arrived in town, he was entertained at the Wills House, which still stands today in the heart of Gettysburg. The old Western Maryland Railway Depot, where Lincoln alighted from the train and first set foot on Gettysburg soil, is pictured on one side of the *Illuminated Manuscript of Lincoln's Gettysburg Address*, while on the opposite side is the Lincoln Memorial in Washington, D.C., where Lincoln's memory is properly enshrined in the hearts of his countrymen for all time.

\* \* \*

Study of the *Illuminated Manuscript of Lincoln's Gettysburg Address* by engravers and craftsmen printers uncovered a variety of technical problems all of which offered barriers in reproducing *Illuminated Manuscripts*. The numerous technical difficulties which would be encountered in reproducing art of this type would demand such a large expenditure that it would make the sale price of such reproductions, prohibitive.

Two years of consultation and graphic study finally bore fruit. Most printing houses were indifferent to the project since their plants were busy and the cheap rapid type of their work would not allow for projects that must be treated with every possible show of esteem and respect. Here was indeed a project to test the patience and skill of the best technicians that the graphic arts had to offer. Thought and enterprise must predominate in the conscientious approach to the many problems offered in the reproduction of *Illuminated Manuscripts*. Intensive study of the original works of MR. GENTILE by the directors of the FINE ARTS PRINT GUILD and research into the existing practices in modern engraving and printing were carried out. Suggestions were made from time to time of an experimental nature, some of a revolutionary nature. An insight into a few of the problems will show even the casual reader that the use of the word revolutionary is not out of place here.

For ordinary reproductions of art-work, such as is seen in the numerous prints which are on the market and in the finer magazines, it is necessary only to use what is known as four-color process printing, utilizing four different colors of ink and 57,600 halftone units per square inch. The resulting combination producing a close resemblance to the original. To acquire a better understanding of the halftone unit, one may inspect a one color newspaper picture under a magnifying glass. The average newspaper uses 4,225 units per square inch.

In reproducing MR. GENTILE's *Illuminated Manuscript of Lincoln's Gettysburg Address*, it will be necessary to use what is known as nine-color process, a process used so seldom as to make it practically unknown. In this method there will be 202,500 halftone units per square inch. And yet, after this is done it will still require both machine and hand work to put into this reproduction the numerous sections of gold illumination that tends to make this type of art an article of great beauty.

The first step in the reproduction of colored artwork is to make what is known as color-separated screen negatives, a very simple procedure in most cases but extremely difficult in the case of *Illuminated Art*, because flashing rays of light reflecting from the gold illumination creates havoc with the photographic process used in producing the negatives. Due to the foregoing and other production difficulties the possibility of any reproductions of this type of art reaching the art loving public has, up to now, been extremely remote.

The FINE ARTS PRINT GUILD has, thru its research and investigations, finally co-ordinated graphic craftsmen in each of the specialized fields thru which the print must go before faithful reproductions can become a reality. In this process a strange paradox has taken place. In the preceding pages of this brochure, it was pointed out how each of the medieval craftsmen engaged in producing *Illuminated Manuscripts* had his own specific task to accomplish. Now, centuries later, this all but lost art has been revived by MR. GENTILE who has mastered each of the medieval specialists crafts and executes a whole *Illuminated Manuscript* singlehanded. Moreover, his execution of it is so complex that its reproduction is a challenge to present day printers, descendants of those early printers who sounded the death knell of medieval *Illuminated Manuscripts*. Now, each specialized craft of the graphic arts must be called upon to do their specific task before reproduction is accomplished. The photographer, the engraver, the etcher, the pressman, etc. Only the time tested craftsman will have a hand in this work, so exacting is its execution.

With this co-ordination of graphic talent, the FINE ARTS PRINT GUILD and those persons sponsoring the First Edition of the *Illuminated Manuscript of Lincoln's Gettysburg Address*, it will now be possible to supply faithful reproductions of this beautiful and celebrated piece of art to the public.

\* \* \*

Three editions of reproductions of the *Illuminated Manuscript of Lincoln's Gettysburg Address* are contemplated. They are:

FIRST EDITION. A sponsors edition limited to 200 original prints, numbered and signed by EDWARD GENTILE, the artist, and printed on hand-made paper of the finest type available.

SECOND EDITION. A collectors edition limited to 500 prints, numbered and signed by EDWARD GENTILE, the artist, and printed on 100% rag paper.

THIRD EDITION. A trade edition, unnumbered and unsigned printed on a very fine quality hard vellum paper.

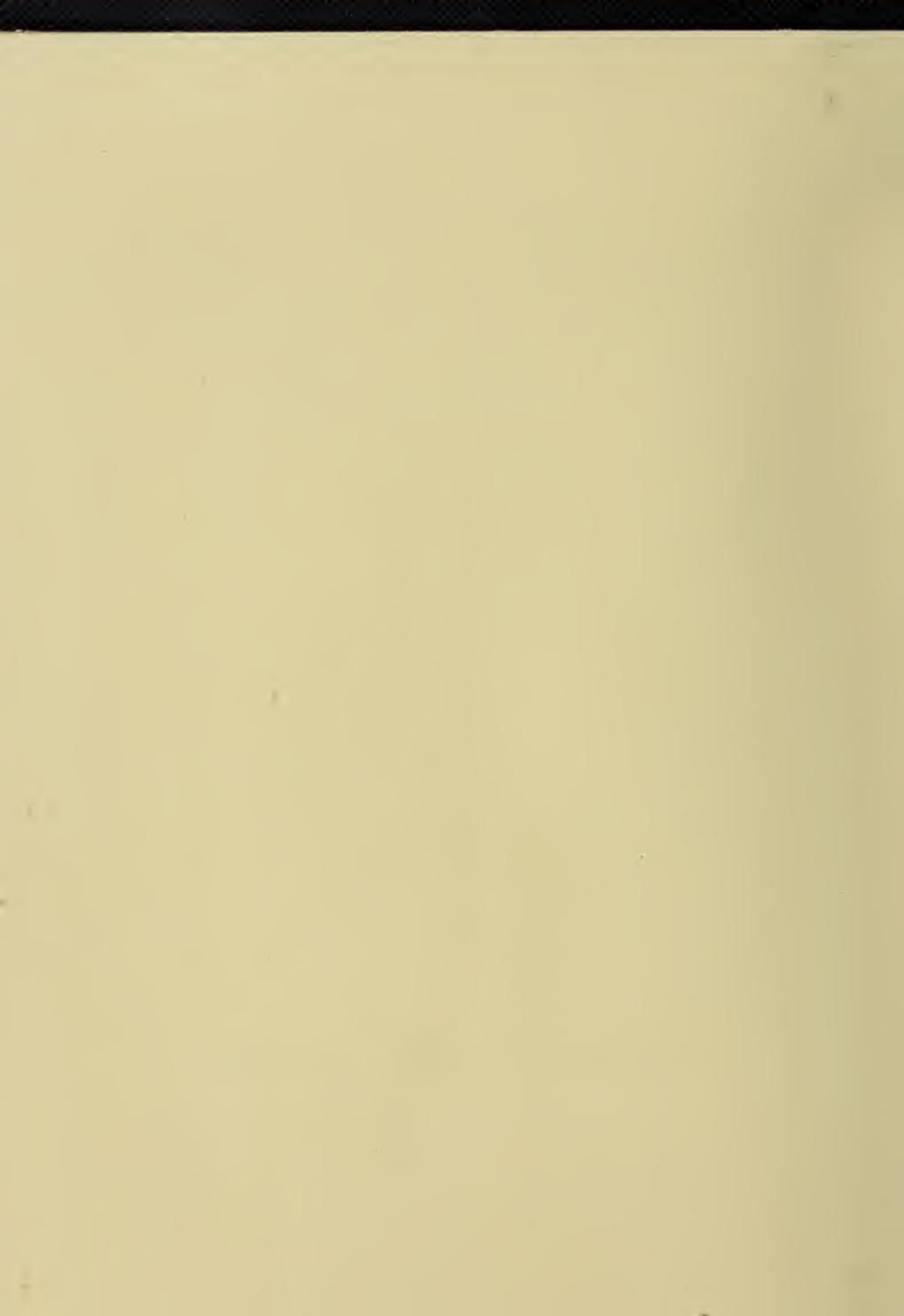
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*This brochure is published and presented by the*

**FINE ARTS PRINT GUILD**

*to foster and further information and knowledge of Illuminated Manuscripts in Art today. All further inquiries should be addressed to the FINE ARTS PRINT GUILD, 1018 Fine Arts Building, 410 South Michigan Boulevard, Chicago 5, Illinois.*





**RESERVATION FOR COLLECTOR'S**

and / or

# TRADE EDITION REPRODUCTIONS

Date \_\_\_\_\_

FINE ARTS PRINT GUILD

## 1018 Fine Arts Building

410 South Michigan Boulevard

Chicago 5, Illinois

Gentlemen:

Reserve for me the following copies of reproductions of the *Illuminated Manuscript of Lincoln's Gettysburg Address.*

\_\_\_\_\_copies of Collector's Edition (Limited to 500 numbered copies, signed by EDWARD GENTILE, the artist, and printed on 100% rag paper) \$25.00 each

\_\_\_\_ copies of Trade Edition (Unnumbered, unsigned and printed on a fine quality hard vellum print paper) \$10.00 each

You may write me when the prints are ready for distribution and I will remit by return mail.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

**Address** \_\_\_\_\_

City, Zone and State\_\_\_\_\_



# *APPLICATION FOR SPONSORSHIP*

Date \_\_\_\_\_

## FINE ARTS PRINT GUILD

1018 Fine Arts Building  
410 South Michigan Boulevard  
Chicago 5, Illinois.

Gentlemen:

To assist in the publication of reproductions of the *Illuminated Manuscript of Lincoln's Gettysburg Address*, I should like to be enrolled as a sponsor.

It is my understanding that I will receive a copy of the FIRST (Sponsors) EDITION of the *Illuminated Manuscript of Lincoln's Gettysburg Address*, one of an edition of 200 numbered and signed by EDWARD GENTILE, the artist, and printed on handmade paper.

Further, it is my understanding that my name (as it appears in the space below) will be printed on the Sponsors List to be published by the FINE ARTS PRINT GUILD and supplied with each print of every edition of the *Illuminated Manuscript of Lincoln's Gettysburg Address*.

In consideration of the above sponsorship priviledges, I herewith enclose my check for \$50.00 as payment in full. It is my understanding that I will receive a certificate of my enrollment as sponsor (that will also serve as a receipt) and stating the number of the print I am to receive.

(If for reasons of your own you wish to use the name of your business affiliation, a trade style, or some association or institution in the event you are sponsoring the print for their benefit, you are free to do so.)

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Name (as you wish it to appear on sponsors list) \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City, Zone and State \_\_\_\_\_





